

The Wayback Machine - <https://web.archive.org/web/20111114163433/http://www.thenewdominion.net:80/17...>

# The New Dominion

- [About](#)
- [Sitemap](#)

 

## Pantusov's introduction to Mulla Bilal's Holy War in China

The following is a translation from Russian of Pantusov's introduction to his printed text version of Mullā Bilāl's 1876 *Ghazāt dar mulk-i Chīn* ("Holy War in China," Russian Война мусульманъ противъ китайцевъ). This version was published in Kazan' in two volumes: the 1880 volume contained the introduction and the annotated text itself, while the 1881 volume contained an extended glossary and further notes to the text.

Mullā Bilāl's lengthy text, which is mostly verse and partly prose, is a remarkable source for the history of the Ili Valley in the 1860s and 1870s. This was a source for Ho-dong Kim's excellent book *Holy war in China: the Muslim rebellion and state in Chinese Central Asia, 1864-1877*, a must-read for anyone interested in Xinjiang.

But I'll let Pantusov do the talking. (Note that his introduction is inaccurate in places and displays the prejudices of a Russian orientalist of the 19 c. The New Dominion does not necessarily share any of the opinions presented below.)

### *The Muslim war against the Chinese*

A text in the Taranchi dialect

published by N. N. Pantusov

Volume One

Kazan'

1880

Permitted by the censor, St. Petersburg, 22 August 1878

### Preface

The title *Kitab-i ghazat dar mulk-i chin* ("religious war in the Chinese state") refers to this essay on this history of the Ili region, presently of the area of Kul'dja [FN: The Kul'dja region is subordinated to the Military Governor of Semirechie Province, who lives in city of Verny, where there is under him a special consul for Kul'djanese affairs.], formerly a Chinese province and then of the Kul'dja Sultanate, the end of the existence of which was on account of political behavior and animosity towards us on the part of the Sultanate government in June of 1871.

This book is written in the Taranchi dialect, which differs quite little from that of Kashgar-Sart. The author is a Taranchi from the city of Kul'dja, Mulla Bilal son of Mulla Yusuf, nicknamed Nazym [ناظم], or "poet." Mulla Bilal, who indeed took part in the fight with the Chinese and the clash with the Russian army, who had seized the Ili region, is still at present hale and healthy, having lived over 54 years. Today, he holds the responsibilities of

an imam at one of the mosques of the city of Kul'dja, while, in his time free from such service, he is a copyist of various writings and – the profession of a mulla – a scribe.

Mulla Bilal begins his *defter* (book) [FN: This book was found in Kul'dja in October 1876. Located in the first leaves of the book are variants borrowed from unfinished draft copies of this composition, preserved by Bilal.] in the ordinary way, with Muslim writers' glorification of God, then of Muhammad, and of the other prophets and *askhab*. The following chapter talks about the author of the book the circumstances of the coming into being thereof.

The history of the Ili border region of the past one hundred or so years and following the war begin the chapter: "The narrative of from which *khan* to which *khan* passed the cities of Ili, in the time of which *khans* they flourished, and during the time of which *khans* they were destroyed." In this chapter, the particulars of the history of the border region begins with the time of the Emperor [*khakan*] Qianlong (or, in the Muslim transliteration...) under whose government was constituted the migration of Kashgarian Sarts – subsequently Taranchis – into the Ili Valley from the different cities of Altishahar nearly 120 years beforehand. [FN: Today Yettishahar, under the power of the Kashgar *bedaulet* [Yaq'ūb Beg], conquered in December 1877 by the Da Ching [Great Qing] army.]

Mulla Bilal takes the history of the region up to the time of the conquest of the Sultanate by Russian arms.

This narrative was written in 1292 of the Hijra [1875], "in the year of the snow leopard" by the Ili reckoning, in verse and, to a lesser degree, prose, and was completed in 1293 [1876].

This narrative is written in the Turkic Taranchi dialect.

The Taranchi dialect, differentiated from the Kashgar-Sart idiom by its content of a great number of Mongol and Chinese words in its lexical composition, is remarkable in regard to its phonetics in the softness of sounds in the pronunciation of words, constrained by which the author often sins in orthography. Thus, owing to this fact, we encounter in his writing soft [qäsim] instead of hard [qasim], [yetib] instead of [yatib].

In the spelling of other words, however, the softness of the tongue does not appear. For example, *على* will be said [eli], *باسلگان* [basylgan] pronounced [besilgan], *اتى* [aty] said [ety]...

The softness of the tongue in connection with idiosyncratic stress – which contravenes the general grammatical rule of stress on the final syllable – makes the Taranchi dialect so little understood to those who know a Turkic language that it requires a significant period of time to learn the ways and forms of communicating in the language, even though a Taranchi speaks the same Turkish language as the Kashgarian Sarts, inhabitants of the Taranchi cradle.

To the Taranchis, under the Sultanate's rule, the overthrow of the Chinese served as an epoch for the beginning of a new era. This is called "Islam" (*تاریخ اسلام*). The conquest by Russian arms took place in the seventh year of Islam; 1877 is the thirteenth year of Islam.

On the model of the Kashgar dialect, there is also found in Taranchi a replacement of the letters *ب* and *پ* with *ف*, although, in pronunciation, the letters *پ* and *ب* are heard in the initial position. Instead of *تایپ*, *تافیپ* is met; instead of *پاره*, *فاره*.

The isolation of the Taranchi people in the Ili Valley, under the odious yoke and oppression of Chinese rule, oppressed and uprooted as a consequence of exorbitant taxes and corvees, allowed the possibility neither of the development of the popular spirit nor of the language. The latter, isolated from mutual lexical exchange and borrowings from other kindred Turkic dialects, could not develop, but rather weakened and spoiled from the admixture of surrounding neighbors from the Mongol and Chinese peoples, as well as the accumulation of some of the features of the Chinese language in certain relations. The former was expressed in the composition of the lexicon of the language, into which entered Chinese, Kalmyk, and Mongol words; the latter in its omission, for

example, in conformity with the shortcomings of Chinese pronunciation, the letter ر in several words and grammatical forms. For example, the Taranchis say [baza] for [bazar], [bizlaga] for [bizlarga]... Probably for this reason, in the verbal suffix دور, the final [r] is discarded. For example, instead of دیدور, they say دیدو [deidu], for بولادور [buladu].

The Taranchi dialect, adjoining to, of the Turkic dialects, the Kyrgyz dialect, the popular Taranchi language assimilated, in part, the special phonetic features of this dialect: substituting the sound [l] with the sound [d], [j] with [zh] (i.e. softer than [dzh]). For example, for ایزلاب, the Taranchis say and writes ازداب, for مونکلاشدی, and the words یغیب and یکرمه the Taranchis pronounce [zhigyb] and [zhigarma]...

#### Share:

